

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
MARCH 20, 1997

PROJECT REVIEWED

Convened: 8:00 AM

KOMO Alley Vacation
Ballpark Site Plan and Adjacent Street Improvements
Monorail Signage

SUBCOMMITTEE

Design Review Evaluation

CITY UPDATES

Department of Neighborhoods
Department of Parks and Recreation

Adjourned: 5:30PM

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Barbara Swift, Chair
Moe Batra
Gail Dubrow
Robert Foley
Gerald Hansmire
Jon Layzer
Rick Sundberg

STAFF PRESENT

Marcia Wagoner
Vanessa Murdock
Michael Read

032097.1 Project: **KOMO ALLEY VACATION**
 Phase: Alley Vacation Request
Presenters: David Grein, Fisher Properties
 Tom Berger, Berger Partnership
 John Phillips, Phillips McCullough
Attendees: Beverly Barnett, Sea Trans
 Shane Dewald, Sea Trans
Time: 1 hour (hourly)

The KOMO TV building is currently located at the southwest corner of 4th Avenue N and Denny Way. Fisher Properties and Broadcasting owns the entire block bounded by 4th Avenue N, Denny Way, 5th Avenue N and John Street. An employee parking lot sits on the eastern half of the block. An alley that runs north to south bisects the block and serves KOMO TV almost exclusively. The current KOMO TV facility does not meet their needs, and as a result, they are looking to expand. Sites in and outside of the city were studied and evaluated, however the current location was determined to be the best alternative. The redevelopment was subject to the Neighborhood Multifamily and Commercial Design Review process, and the current design is a reflection of the designer's response to the Design Review guidelines.

Two L shaped buildings are proposed, focused around a pedestrian plaza that will originate at the southeast corner of Denny Way and 5th Avenue N, and cut diagonally through the site to the northern end of 4th Ave. North, approximately 90 feet from the corner. A water feature will punctuate the corner of 5th Ave. N and Denny Way. A row of trees in line with that along 5th Avenue to the south, will penetrate the plaza. Two radial paving patterns, each originating from the sidewalk entrances into the plaza will converge at the center of the plaza. The two building have been stepped back so as to allow for good sun penetration into the plaza. The design calls for the vacation of the alley.

Discussion

Sundberg: Are both buildings the same height?

Grein: Yes, they area each 85 feet high.

Phillips: But they do step back as they rise.

Grein: That is correct, the buildings step back at the 3rd, 4th and 5th floors. A heliport will be at the northwest corner of the block. We were encouraged by members of the public not to hide the features of our business that are unique to our business such as the heliport and the dishes. This building will most definitely interact with the surrounding community.

Dubrow: In the course of business, how frequently do deliveries occur? You mentioned that the pedestrian plaza can also function for emergency vehicle access and delivery access - two uses that are problematic when juxtaposed with pedestrian activity. I also wonder, with Seattle Center across the street having an abundance of open

space, what compelling reasons you can point to for additional open space in this particular area?

Berger: The plaza is not a destination point, rather it is a path. It becomes an outdoor space for Fisher properties who will have their headquarters here, without excluding the public. As for deliveries, they will be encouraged to occur early in the morning or late in the evening. In addition, deliveries can occur from 4th and 5th Avenues N.

Grein: There is a significant loading dock area that is removed from the pedestrian plaza. Federal Express and UPS are required to come to the loading dock at specific times, they do not arrive at whim. In addition, KOMO is very excited about having a public place and will want to see that it is used as such.

Weed: The plaza can really be seen as a gateway to Seattle Center.

Foley: I find that the row of trees that you have introduced into the plaza push the pedestrian flow westward. The corner is not very embracing. I would prefer to let the space be a little more open.

Berger: We want to use the fountain to signal the public nature of the plaza. People are naturally drawn to water features and our hope is people will continue to be drawn through the plaza.

Dubrow: I would contend that without a visual cue to draw a person through the space, it will be difficult to entice a pedestrian through.

Swift: The width of the plaza is extremely important in how people will perceive the relative public-ness of the space. What will be critical is what a pedestrian sees from the corner looking into the plaza. I feel that as you move north through the plaza, the feeling is less public and more private. I wonder about the tools you are using at the entries to the plaza, where people do their decision making. The kinds of materials you use can indicate the level of public-ness. You have two messages that you are trying to convey; corporate headquarters and public alley. You need to find a way to marry the two uses.

Berger: We chose cast-in-place concrete as our primary material for the very reason that it indicates a public area more than, say, granite. Water as a feature, invites people. Your comments about the entries are appropriate. We certainly need visual enticements and cues. The width between the two buildings is also generous and has a public quality. Once people come into the space, the movement through is obvious.

Foley: There are public spaces and then there are *great* public spaces. Some of your design features such as the drum shape and the helipad, generate a circular form. Rather than try to replicate that in the radial paving pattern, I think the solution can be plainer. Let the space between the buildings have its own identity rather than be influenced by others.

Dubrow: I think the visual tricks will accent the retail portions of the project, but they do not define a plaza. It may increase the ground floor retail but it does not create a public right-of-way.

Sundberg: I don't completely agree. I think there might be too much at the center of the plaza. I like the row of trees marching across Denny into the plaza.

- Hansmire:** I really like the idea of 5th Avenue pushing into the space. Walking down 5th Avenue, it is going to be enticing to see the trees continue., although the street takes a jog to the right. I would add that as a pedestrian, you do not register the site plan. Items that are three feet off the ground are what draw you through.
- Swift:** The radial pattern pushes people out from the center.
- Hansmire:** The pattern overwhelms the street, I think it could be simpler.
- Berger:** In plan view the pattern is pretty strong. It is incumbent on us to make the place inviting, not confusing. We have more to do with lighting and vertical elements.
- Hansmire:** I would suggest using icons of the street. If parts of the street that I am used to are present, I will feel more comfortable.
- Dubrow:** What kinds of retail will you have at the ground level?
- Grein:** Some food, in addition to functions that are related to KOMO. KOMO is experimenting with high definition TV. We will probably have a small theater off the plaza for special screening of high definition TV broadcasts. The restaurant space at the northwest corner will hopefully spill out onto the plaza and sidewalk.
- Dewald:** I met with members of the Denny community last week. They would like to see what kind of improvements you could do beyond your block.
- Grein:** We have spoken about lighting ideas. After we get further along in our design we would be happy to come back and look at ways to tie back into the neighborhood.
- Dewald:** It looks like your development is doing a lot to draw people in. I think you will also need to think about how to draw people to the site.
- Berger:** After we move along, we intend to look at the Marble Black triangle across Denny Way.
- Dubrow:** The Seattle Police Department has serious concerns about evening alleys and interior courts. Have you checked with them? You have surveillance in the daytime, but not in the nighttime. Drawing people off the street is drawing eyes off the street.
- Swift:** As we are in the process of evaluating the Design Review process, we would be most interested in hearing your comments regarding Design Review.
- Grein:** I think it was an effective use of our time. The process allows for more interaction between the concerned parties. We got a lot of comments from the Design Review Board meeting that helped us shape the design as it stands today.
- Batra:** I understand the helipad will be moved closer to Broad street. Do you anticipate that being a traffic hazard?
- Grein:** We have thought a lot about that question. Presently the helipad is 40 feet above the street level and only partially visible. In the future it will be at 85 feet, and even less visible from the street. We have brought in a helipad consultant who endorsed the location. In addition, by moving it farther to the north, we decrease the noise impact on the residents to the south.
- Dubrow:** I think there needs to be a compelling public benefit for the vacation of a public right-of-way. As presented, this project does not have such a compelling public benefit. It lacks a clear visual connection from one end of the plaza to the other.

Hansmire: I think Dubrow has some good points. However the owner is owed some sense of predictability in this review process. I think the details will be resolved through the design process.

Sundberg: I support Hansmire's point of view, also sharing some of Dubrow's concerns.

Batra: I am concerned about the impact of increased delivery traffic on current road volume and circulation.

Layzer: Granting skybridge and street vacation requests are City Council decisions. As such they are incremental and politically loaded. I think it is important that this group review such requests in a different light. In this case, I feel the developer has presented in good faith and I feel comfortable recommending approval of the alley vacation request with the knowledge that we will see the design further down the line. In addition, I appreciate Dubrow's opinions.

Foley: I am sympathetic to the developer. We usually don't see alley vacation requests such as this. I do not want to punish a proponent who has operated in good faith.

ACTION: The Commission applauds the effort of the design team to aggressively pursue a project that is so sensitive to the community and recommends approval of the alley vacation request with the following comments:

- continue to bring street icons through the pedestrian plaza,
- simplify the internal forms of the plaza so as to develop an understandable spatial form,
- indicate the public nature of the plaza through careful material selection and space programming,
- pursue a design that provides safety at all hours.

Furthermore, the Commission requests that the project return for review and comment at a later stage in the design process.

Minority

Opinion: The granting of the alley vacation should be conditioned on the following:

- provide a clear line of sight through the plaza,
- submit the design to the Seattle Police Department for review of degree of safety provided in the design,
- resolve the issue of conflicting use between loading vehicles and pedestrians.

032097.2

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Discussion

Jim Diers, Director

Time: 1 hour (N/C)

Director Diers briefed the Commission on the structure and responsibilities of the Department of Neighborhoods. The Department of Neighborhoods seeks to preserve and enhance Seattle's diverse neighborhoods, to empower people to make positive contributions in their communities and to bring government closer to all people, ensuring it is responsive. Four divisions make up the Department: the Neighborhood Service Centers, the Citizens Service Bureau, Historic Preservation and the Neighborhood Matching Fund. Commissioners expressed interest in the clustering of services and how that may be accomplished at a neighborhood level. Schools and major institutions were also discussed.

The Commission looks forward to opportunities for collaboration between the Department of Neighborhoods and the Design Commission on issues including public awareness of design, quasi-public spaces and major institutions and schools.

032097.3

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Discussion

Ken Bounds, Director

Nancy Glaser, Department of Parks and Recreation

Time: 1 hour (N/C)

Director Bounds briefed the Commission on the status of various projects in the Department of Parks and Recreation. The Aquarium, Sand Point and Athletic Fields were among those topics discussed. Commissioners and Director Bounds spoke about the current downturn in capital funding to the Department and noted such time as being optimal for longer range planning. The Commission offered to assist the Department of Parks and Recreation at such a time when the neighborhood projects must be prioritized and services collocated for maximum city-wide benefit.

The Commission looks forward to a continued strong working relationship with the Department of Parks and Recreation.

032097.4

COMMISSION BUSINESS

- A. MINUTES OF MARCH 6, 1997 Approval delayed until April 3, 1997.
- B. 1997 GOALS Draft version approved with minor changes.
- C. PIKE STREET WORKSHOP COMMISSIONER Layzer will serve.

D. CENTRAL AREA SENIOR CENTER CONSULTANT SELECTION Sundberg will serve

E. MERCER CORRIDOR CONSULTANT SELECTION Hansmire will serve.

032097.5 Project: **BALLPARK SITE PLAN AND ADJACENT STREET IMPROVEMENTS**
 Phase: Briefing
 Presenters: Steve Pearce, Office of Management and Planning
 Chuck Kirchner, Public Facilities District
 Dennis Forsyth, NBBJ
 Larry Goetz, NBBJ
 Kevin Carl, Jones & Jones
 Attendees: Shane Dewald, SeaTrans
 Mark Johnson, DCLU
 Patricia Lee, International Special Review District
 Melody McCutcheon, Mariners Representative
 Joe Taskey, Sea Trans
 Time: 1.5 hour (N/C)

The ballpark design team briefed the Design Commission on the project design so as to provide a context for future reviews pertaining to the pedestrian connection plan. The Public Facilities District is obligated to spend \$1.2 million on the pedestrian connections leading away from the site. While the plan is not limited to that dollar amount, additional fund sources will have to be identified if the cost exceeds \$1.2 million.

The new ballpark site sits east of First Avenue, north of S. Atlantic St., south of Royal Brougham and west of the BNSF railroad tracks. It is anticipated that 50% of the ballpark event attendees will enter the facility from the north, 40% from the south and 10% from the east. Corner entries have been designed accordingly to accommodate the pedestrian flow. The sidewalk along First Avenue S will be 30 feet wide, that along the south face of the ballpark will be 40 feet wide. The sidewalk along the north face of the ballpark will be 22 feet wide, but will expand into a plaza area that is carved out underneath the structure of the park. People will have visual access to the playfield from the north plaza. The character of the ballpark tries to respond to that of the surrounding neighborhoods; Pioneer Square, the International District and SODO. The north and south sides of the facility will have structural tracks for a retractable roof system. Homeplate will sit at the southwest corner of the ballpark.

Discussion

Dubrow: Have you identified any major sites for public art?

Forsyth: 110 artists originally submitted portfolios. That number has been narrowed down to 9 that will develop proposals for the ballpark. Walls of the southwest and northwest entries are possible locations for art, as are the ends of the seat rows, and

the foul poles. We want to incorporate a certain amount of found objects, found art in the project as well.

Dubrow: Are any of the artists working strategically with the street improvement plan?

Kirchner: There is nothing to preclude that collaboration.

Goetz: Tree grates have also been considered as a location for art.

Swift: Your sidewalk widths are generous and will accommodate the event crowds. However, on a typical day those sidewalks will be empty. Have you thought of ways to break down the 2 x 2 grid and bring some of that all-American activity that is housed inside, outside?

Dubrow: It really is a perfect opportunity to tie the facility in with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Goetz: We will use street furniture, such as bus shelters, bike racks and trash receptacles to help knit the area together.

Swift: What is going to happen to the group of maturing Zelkovas along Royal Brougham?

Carl: We will be replacing them with London Plane trees after construction.

Swift: As a treed east-west corridor, Royal Brougham is really developing. It would be a shame to impede that development with the loss of the alignment of Zelkovas.

Carl: We are proposing to plant London Planes on both sides of Royal Brougham Way adjacent to the site. First Avenue S. and S. Occidental are the main pedestrian routes to the ballpark. The continued use of London Planes responds to the north-south corridor.

Swift: I have two concerns. First, groups of Zelkovas have been used in the International District and with the existing planting of Zelkova on Royal Brougham it creates a connection to the ID, which is important. Second, keeping the London Planes opened up enough to stay healthy is a concern in this climate.

Carl: Due to extensive design changes and generally reduced tree quantities, we chose to use the London Planes exclusively which have done very well in this area.

Swift: Going to that large of a tree maybe trying to solve a scale problem that you do not have.

On another issue, how do you start to prioritize the \$1.2 million you have to spend?

Dubrow: I think it is very important that you spend some of the art budget off the site, to help tie the facility in with the surrounding neighborhoods. You have made a great references in your design to Pioneer Square, you might think of ways to make a gesture towards the International District. For example, there is a strong historical presence of Chinese Americans in the International District that you could refer to in some treatment of the trestle structure. Another possibility is something kinetic that relates to the movement of the roof.

Forsyth: Tying into the movement of the roof has some possibilities. The roof structure is so technically driven that we cannot interfere with it. Nothing is impossible but some things are cost prohibitive.

Dubrow: I was thinking more along the lines of around the structure, not part of the structure.

Foley: Regarding a roof movement piece, I would proceed with caution. It would be terrible to not do something worthy of the kinetic feat.

Dewald: I feel that if there was a place in Settle for the London Plane, this would be it, however the spacing you are proposing is very tight. I speak not from a design standpoint, but from a health standpoint. It would be regrettable not to tie this improvement in with the existing Zelkova from 6th to Alaskan Way. I think there is really an opportunity here to combine the Zelkova and the London Plane.

Sundberg: I would re-iterate the importance of the east west connection and strengthening that connection as much as possible.

Batra: I am concerned about Seagulls nesting in the roof structure. Have you looked into this?

Forsyth: We spoke at length with the design team and managers for Skydome in Toronto, and Seagulls have not been a problem. Apparently they are too scared of getting trapped, so they avoid going up under the structure.

ACTION: **Briefing only, no action required. The Commission thanks the design team for the thorough briefing and requests background information regarding visitor volume and entry point analyses prior to the next review.**

032097.6 Project: **MONORAIL SIGNAGE**
Phase: Concept Development
Presenters: Ethan Melone, Office of Management and Planning
Dan White, Seattle Monorail Services
Stephanie Van Dyke, Seattle Center
Time: 0.5 hour (hourly)

Seattle Monorail Services is proposing a 10'6" kiosk informational sign to be located in Westlake Park. The east and west faces of the sign would have the monorail logo and information about the location of the monorail stop, running times and fares. The north and south faces would simply have the word "monorail" written along the side. The proposed location is on the north side of Pine Street just west of the crosswalk, 2 feet from the curb.

Discussion

Layzer: What is the annual monorail ridership?

White: 2.53 million.

Swift: A lot of attention has been given to the objects currently in Westlake Park and the amount of open space they occupy. What does the Pine Street Advisory Task Force report recommend?

Hansmire: The location you have proposed is prominent.

Dubrow: Your sign design is elegant, but I have the sense that it is taller than it needs to be. It is beyond the human scale.

- White:** If you were to recommend 8'6" as a height, I would be comfortable with that.
- Sundberg:** I am comfortable with the height, however I was more comfortable with your original proposed location east of the crosswalk.
- Hansmire:** I think locating the sign within visual contact of the monorail itself makes sense.
- Swift:** I would recommend looking at a location that is further in from the street, about 8 or 10 feet from the curb.
- Hansmire:** This is a good sized piece of urban street furniture. Not wanting to see the street cluttered, I would recommend a shorter sign set back further into the plaza or maintaining the current proposed height and locating the sign by the curb. In either case, locate it as far east as you can.
- Dubrow:** Is the kiosk illuminated?
- White:** No, the MONORAIL letters will either be vinyl or cut steel.
- Layzer:** I strongly encourage you to emphasize the map and where to go to catch the monorail and where the monorail can take you. Fare and schedule information are secondary.
- Swift:** Keep it simple.

ACTION: The Commission recommends approval of the sign with the following comments:

- site the kiosk as far east as possible , while keeping the crosswalk site lines clear, and
- maintain the height if the kiosk is sited at the curb, shorten the height of the sign if it is to be sited further from the curb line.

Furthermore, the Commission acknowledges the desire to keep the street as uncluttered as possible, but supports this transit oriented sign that is elegant in design.

DESIGN REVIEW EVALUATION

Discussion

Patrick Doherty, Department of Construction and Land Use

Bob Morgon, Central Staff

Time: 1.5 hour (N/C)

Commissioners and staff reviewed the compiled Design Review evaluation forms from architects, developers and owners.